

HIGH DENSITY PATCH PANEL

Cross-Reference to Related Applications

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/459,217, filed on April 3, 2003, the entirety of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

Background of the Invention

[0002] The present invention is directed to a patch panel and, more particularly, a high density patch panel utilizing six, eight-position faceplates for housing a total of 48 ports in one rack unit.

[0003] 24-port and 32-port patch panels having frames that mount to any standardized 19-inch network rack and utilize one rack space are known in the telecommunications industry. However, prior art devices, such as the connector mounting receptacles disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,672,074, require the connector to be rotated into engagement with the wall plate and, thus, require a significant amount of space between connector rows.

[0004] Moreover, 48-port patch panels having frames that mount to any standardized 19-inch network rack and utilize one rack space are known in the telecommunications industry. However, prior art devices, such as Hubbell Premise Wiring's UDX Series Jack Panels, mount the connectors directly into the rear of the patch panel frame, and thus, do not have a faceplate mounted into the frame. Also, the Hubbell jack panels utilize a staggered frame design to facilitate installation and removal of the keystone connectors. In fact, if two keystone connectors were vertically aligned within the patch panel, the connectors would occupy more than one rack unit (1.72 inches high).

[0005] It would be desirable to provide a patch panel having a total of 48 ports in one rack unit.

[0006] It would also be desirable to provide a patch panel having two rows of modular jacks mounted therein, with at least two modular jacks vertically aligned within the patch panel.

[0007] It would further be desirable to provide a patch panel having a plurality of modular jacks capable of being mounted straight into the rear of a faceplate to minimize the required distance between the two rows of modular jacks.

Summary of the Invention

[0008] A patch panel is disclosed. The patch panel includes a frame, a faceplate mountable into a rear side of the frame, and at least one modular jack mountable into a rear side of the faceplate. The frame has a plurality of faceplate openings, and the faceplate has a plurality of modules. Each module has at least one modular jack retention latch.

[0009] Preferably, the frame has a top flange including a plurality of first notches and a bottom flange including a plurality of second notches. Moreover, the frame includes indicia centered above each modular jack position.

[0010] Preferably, the frame has six faceplate openings, and a center bar extending from a first end thereof to a second end thereof. Moreover, the frame has a plurality of first mounting apertures at the first end and a plurality of second mounting apertures at the second end.

[0011] Preferably, the faceplate has a top flange including a plurality of first faceplate retention latches and a bottom flange including a plurality of second faceplate retention latches.

[0012] Preferably, each faceplate has four modules and eight modular jack openings. Each module includes two modular jacks, two modular jack retention latches and three modular jack stops.

[0013] Preferably, the patch panel includes forty-eight modular jacks, with at least two modular jacks vertically aligned within the patch panel.

Brief Description of Figures

[0014] FIG. 1 is a top front right perspective view of a patch panel according to the present invention;

[0015] FIG. 2 is a top front right perspective view of the frame utilized in the patch panel of FIG. 1;

[0016] FIG. 3 is a front view of the frame of FIG. 2;

[0017] FIG. 4 is a bottom view of the frame of FIG. 2;

[0018] FIG. 5 is a top front right perspective view of one of the faceplates utilized in the patch panel of FIG. 1;

[0019] FIG. 6 is a front view of the faceplate of FIG. 5;

[0020] FIG. 7 is a right side view of the faceplate of FIG. 5;

[0021] FIG. 8 is a bottom view of the faceplate of FIG. 5;

[0022] FIG. 9 is a top view of one of the modular jacks utilized in the patch panel of FIG. 1;

[0023] FIG. 10 is a front view of the modular jack of FIG. 9;

[0024] FIG. 11 is a right side view of the modular jack of FIG. 9;

[0025] FIG. 12 is a partial exploded top front right perspective view of FIG. 1, showing the faceplates being inserted into the rear of the frame;

[0026] FIG. 13 is a right side view of the faceplate similar to FIG. 7, showing the modular jack prior to insertion into the faceplate;

[0027] FIG. 14 is a right side view of the faceplate similar to FIG. 7, showing the modular jack after insertion into the faceplate;

[0028] FIG. 15 is a cross-sectional view taken along lines 15-15 of FIG. 12, showing the modular jack prior to insertion into the faceplate; and

[0029] FIG. 16 is a cross-sectional view taken along lines 16-16 of FIG. 12, showing the modular jack after insertion into the faceplate.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiments

[0030] The illustrated embodiments of the invention are directed to a high density patch panel utilizing six, eight-position faceplates for a total of 48 ports in one rack unit.

[0031] FIG. 1 shows a fully assembled high density patch panel 20. The patch panel 20 includes a frame 22 (see FIGS. 2-4), a plurality of faceplates, such as faceplate 24 (see FIGS. 5-8), and a plurality of modular jacks, such as modular jack 26 (see FIGS. 9-11). Preferably, the frame 22 is metal, and the faceplate 24 is plastic. However, it is likewise contemplated that the frame 22 and the faceplate 24 may be made of various materials.

[0032] As best seen in FIG. 12, the patch panel 20 has six, eight-position faceplates 24. However, it is likewise contemplated that the patch panel 20 may include any number of faceplates having any number of positions. For example, the patch panel 20 may include four, twelve-position faceplates or twelve, four-position faceplates.

[0033] FIGS. 2-4 show the frame 22. Although the frame 22 is flat, it is likewise contemplated that the frame 22 may be angled, as disclosed in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/916,923, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference. The frame 22 has a center bar 28 that runs the horizontal length of the frame 22 and adds strength to the frame 22. The center bar 28 divides each faceplate opening 38 into two separate openings. As best seen in FIG. 2, the frame 22 has a top flange 30 including a plurality of notches, such as notch 32. Similarly, as best seen in FIG. 4, the frame 22 has a bottom flange 34 including a plurality of notches, such as notch 36. The notches 32, 36 allow the faceplate 24 to be snap-mounted into the rear side of the frame 22.

[0034] As best seen in FIGS. 2 and 3, the frame 22 has a plurality of faceplate openings, such as faceplate opening 38, for receiving a plurality of modular jacks, such as modular jack 26 shown in FIGS. 9-11. Indicia 40, such as numbers 1-48, are silk-screened and centered above each module position for identifying each individual port on the frame 22. The frame 22 also includes a plurality of mounting apertures, such as mounting aperture 42, for securing the frame 22 to any standardized 19-inch rack.

[0035] FIGS. 5-8 show the faceplate 24. As best seen in FIG. 5, the faceplate 24 has a top flange 44 including two faceplate retention latches 46, 48. Similarly, as best seen in FIG. 8, the faceplate has a bottom flange 50 including two faceplate retention latches 52, 54. The retention latches 46, 48, 52, 54 allow the faceplate 24 to be snap-mounted into the rear side of the frame 22, as shown in FIG. 12.

[0036] As best seen in FIGS. 5 and 6, the faceplate 24 has four modules 56, 58, 60, 62, and each module only accommodates two modular jacks to increase the strength of the faceplate 24. Each module includes two modular jack retention latches 64, 66, which allow

the modular jacks to be mounted straight into the rear of the faceplate 24 and flush with the frame 22. The modular jack retention latches 64, 66 maximize the patch panel density because the straight-in insertion of the modular jacks minimizes the required distance between two vertically stacked modular jacks. Each module also includes three modular jack stops 68, 70, 72, which secure two modular jacks therein.

[0037] In operation, the faceplate 24 is snap-mounted into the rear of the frame 22, as best seen in FIG. 12. Once all six faceplates are inserted into the rear of the frame 22, the plurality of modular jacks are inserted into the rear of the faceplates. FIGS. 13 and 15 show the modular jack 26 prior to insertion into the rear of the faceplate 24. As best seen in FIG. 15, the modular jack 26 abuts the rear of the modular jack retention latch 64. Conversely, FIGS. 14 and 16 show the modular jack 26 after insertion into the rear of the faceplate 24. As best seen in FIG. 16, the modular jack retention latch 64 abuts the rear of the modular jack 26, and the front of the modular jack 26 abuts the modular jack stop 70.

[0038] The disclosed invention provides a high density patch panel having a plurality of faceplates mounted therein, each faceplate having modular jack retention latches that allow modular jacks to be mounted straight into the rear of the faceplate and flush with the frame. It should be noted that the above-described and illustrated embodiments and preferred embodiments of the invention are not an exhaustive listing of the forms such a patch panel in accordance with the invention might take; rather, they serve as exemplary and illustrative of embodiments of the invention as presently understood. By way of example, and without limitation, a patch panel having a faceplate including modular jack retention latches on the side walls thereof is contemplated to be within the scope of the invention. Many other forms of the invention are believed to exist.